

Daniel Sudar

Executive Chef, Red Lantern

Daniel Sudar, 33, was most recently chef de cuisine at San Francisco's popular Betelnut restaurant. Born in Central Java, Indonesia, Sudar was raised in a family with a great appreciation for both art and food. His father, grandfather and great grandfather were silversmiths, and his mother ran a bustling catering business. Sudar developed his passion for cooking as a young child helping his mother in the kitchen.

The sense of satisfaction Sudar derived from watching people enjoy his creations was addictive, and he knew he was destined to be a chef. To that end, he enrolled in culinary school in Indonesia and mastered the art of Pacific Rim cuisine. He cooked in a high-end hotel in Indonesia for several years before coming to San Francisco. Not content with just one culinary school degree, Sudar completed his studies at the California Culinary Academy in 1997.

Since graduating, he has cooked alongside Gary Danko and Sylvain Portay at San Francisco's Dining Room at the Ritz-Carlton, with George Morrone at One Market Restaurant, and with Bruce Hill at The Waterfront Restaurant . One of Sudar's proudest culinary moments occurred when he had the opportunity to cook for former President Bill Clinton when he was in town to support Gavin Newsom's run for mayor in 2003. Outgoing mayor, Willie Brown, was also at the table. Betelnut's executive chef was off that day, and Sudar jumped at the chance to wow the political heavyweights with a special menu.

Sudar aims to educate his guests on the nuances and varied flavors of Southeast Asian cuisine. "Due to European colonization throughout history, Southeast Asian cuisine has been influenced by many culinary traditions," says Sudar. "For example, we got butter and foie gras from the French in Vietnam, chocolate from the Dutch in Indonesia, and saffron from Spanish settlers in the Philippines."

To achieve the complex, layered flavors of this cuisine, there can be no shortcuts. "Many Asian restaurants rely on a mother sauce, which they tweak for each dish," explains Sudar. "This approach can

tend to make everything on a menu taste almost the same. At Red Lantern, each dish and its sauce are crafted from scratch, with unique ingredients that are true to their country of origin.”

Despite a demanding culinary career, Sudar has been designing jewelry for many years, using techniques passed down through his family. He even has some culinary-inspired designs, such as his Sari necklace, based on a Polynesian bamboo sieve used to strain rice and beans. Sudar's designs have become so popular that he established his own jewelry company in 2006 ([www.danielsudar.com](http://www.danielsudar.com)). Top fashion designer Colleen Quen featured his hand-crafted silver pieces at San Francisco Fashion Week 2006.